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A Tale of Two, and Two Others.*

BY ELIZABETH OWEN.

"IT is so ridiculous," she said, and laughed softly. She *always* smiled when she thought of him, and not infrequently she laughed. He was so very devoted to her, and he was so young — so much younger than she. At first she thought, "He is lonesome and he wants a friend. He doesn't know many people, and the few he does know are not attracted by him, perhaps, for he is not attractive. I think I must remind him of his mother or his sister. Well, I am sometimes lonesome, too. Even having hosts of friends doesn't prevent one's being lonesome."

So she would let him sit beside her and talk — that is, *she* would talk — he was not a brilliant conversationalist — he would watch her while she talked, putting in a quiet, pointed observation occasionally, laughing gayly when she struck a humorous vein. He would bring her shawl, her book, her footstool — anything she could suggest to make her comfortable.

When he had leisure he would ask her to walk with him, to go and see a play, to look at some new art collection — and she went because there was nothing better to do. It was all old to her, but

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* The writer of this story was awarded the California Trip Prize — $350 — in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending February 26, 1902.

fresh and new to him, and his boyish enthusiasm kindled a latent spark in her at times.

He would come to her for encouragement, too — life was a little hard for him — and she encouraged him carelessly. She knew — or thought she knew — that there was nothing in life worth toiling for, but he had such innate faith in all things good and true — such certainty that most things *were* good and true — that she would not shock him by saying so. He took her light encouragement gratefully, and went on cheerfully, striving against the odds that were always bobbing up serenely in his way.

Of late, it had come to be a settled matter — at least in his mind — that he should spend all his spare moments with her if she was not otherwise engaged. Whether she was sitting in the parlor or on the veranda when he returned from his work, he was immediately beside her, and if she was in neither place he haunted the grounds till he found her. If she was in her place at dinner when he came, and there was a vacant chair beside her, he took it. Sometimes it made her angry — this assurance of his (she had noticed some smile at it) — just for a moment. It was scarcely worth while being angry at anything he did, and she cared little what the others thought. This was not her world, anyway. She was here for only a short time — just a little longer.

But he was getting such an earnestness in his eyes, such a tenderness and reverence in his manner, that she began to think, and the thought resolved itself into a question: "Is it possible he is falling in love with me?" It was *so* ridiculous — and she laughed.

She was not a heartless, worldly woman, although she was, in a sense, a woman of the world and had lost some heart. She had had her ideals, and they had been more or less shattered; she had her ambitions, and had not succeeded as she desired. She had her dreams of love and home, and they faded one by one.

She was a very attractive woman. Time was kind to her — touched her lightly — leaving little trace. Bright-eyed and bonnie, with never-failing health of body and health of mind, she was one of those women who bloom and are beautiful even when the hair is white.

She was alone in the world, but owned plenty of this world's

goods, so there was no need that she exert herself, or use her talents, unless she chose. There was a time when she had many plans, when she was one of the world's workers. But obstacles sprang up in her chosen way, and she was not made of the stern stuff that overcomes. She gave up her ambitions, her work, and became one of the lookers-on at the world's passing show — making merry sport of it sometimes — with enough of her old care for it to shed a tear now and then — to think sad, deep things about it.

He was a young man — quite young — tall and thin, and awkward, but for a saving self-assurance. Unattractive in appearance, even homely of face. "As homely as Lincoln," she often thought, noting the similiarity of feature in the high cheek bones and sunken cheeks — perhaps, too, something of the same strength and steadfastness in the chin, and the same softness of heart about the mouth and in the eyes.

He was practically unspoiled by his contact with the world — though, verily, he had not come in contact with it in great bulk till of late. His faith in God and man, truth and goodness, remained intact, beautiful to see.

He wanted sympathy and encouragement in his work — he *wanted* it, I say — he did not really need it. Some of us both want and need it. But natures like his can faithfully and steadfastly pursue a chosen course without one word of cheer, however much they may want it.

He was practically alone, too, far removed from all bound to him by ties of blood. Once she had mentioned the fact that she was alone in the world, and he said, "It ought not to be so. It is not right that any woman should be alone." She merrily quoted, "'And the Lord said, It is not good that the *man* should be alone.' He never said that about woman."

She never asked him about his former life, his family or his friends. Nor did he ask about hers. He knew her as she was, and he thought her a gifted and good woman, lovely beyond compare. She thought enough about him to say, when he was detained later than usual, "Where is that stupid boy?" and then to wonder why she missed him at all.

One evening she was wandering aimlessly in the moonlit stretch

of garden farthest from the hotel, thinking of numberless things. Turning suddenly, she came face to face with him. He had evidently been walking behind her, waiting for her to turn. The moon shone full in his face, and, looking up into it, she read something so plainly that it could not have been plainer to her put into words. It terrified her, and, panic-stricken, without a word, she ran through the garden, over the lawn, up the steps and into her rooms. When a few minutes later he appeared at her door with the wrap she had dropped in her haste and a mute apology in his face, she explained that she was nervous and had been frightened at his sudden appearance. To herself she said, "What a fool I am! I am like a girl of sixteen. What must I do? I must disenchant, disillusionize him. I will tell him how old I am." And at the thought she sighed. No matter how lightly the years pass over her, the knowledge that they have passed oppresses a woman.

When next they met, her heart failed her, and her facile tongue refused to aid in the disclosure — the disillusionizing. She contented herself with saying that she was thinking of going away for awhile — perhaps permanently. They were at the table. She thought it best to say it in the presence of others.

After a minute's silence, he said quietly, "You are going away — when?"

"Soon," she replied, "to-morrow, or the next day."

The table talk went on and he entered into it more than was usual with him. He was accustomed to maintaining silence unless appealed to about something under discussion. She was very quiet and finally arose and slipped away. But he was at the foot of the stairs as soon as she.

"You will walk in the garden?" he asked. If there was one note of entreaty in the voice there were two of command. She hesitated, said something about being tired, but he held the door open and she went out like a child.

They walked silently over the moonlit space again.

"You were frightened last night. Why?" She did not reply, and he continued, "I have come suddenly upon you before, and you were not frightened." She was silent still, and he said with a little tone of tense irritation:

"You will not go away. It would not be right. I want you."

She shivered in the warm night. He raised her shawl, wrapped it around her, and, as he touched her arm, clutched it almost savagely.

"You will not go away. I love you. You will stay, and after awhile you will marry me."

With a sudden impulse she shook her arm free and said bitterly:

"Marry you! Do you know how old I am? I will tell you. I am at least ten years older than you; perhaps more."

He looked astounded, as he was, more because of the unusual tone and action, however, than because of the words. Perhaps he had guessed that she was older than she seemed, for he said, tranquilly:

"Love knows no time. That would make no difference."

Then she had another impulse. The thought of his self-assurance — his *conceit*, she deemed it — that he had taken so much for granted, made her unreasonably angry.

"Marry you!" she repeated with a bitter laugh. "You have not even asked me. You simply said that I would, in your lofty self-assurance. Neither have you asked me if I loved you. You assumed that I did. Other men, distinguished men, men of letters, men of wealth and power, men of great personal attraction, have humbly sued for permission to gain my love. You, a boy, who have nothing to offer me, absolutely nothing, not even personal attractiveness, you take it for granted that I love you and that I will marry you. You are mistaken!"

She had grown more angry as she proceeded. All her pride was up in arms.

He stood still and looked at her, with a white face. His lips moved. Perhaps he was trying to say that he had nothing but a true heart and a pure life to offer her; but he did not. He turned and walked slowly away as if in a dream. Then he walked as slowly back, put his arm gently about her shoulders, smoothed the hair from her temples and gazed silently in her eyes. When he walked quickly away and into the house, she sank upon a garden seat, the tears rolling slowly down her face.

She was up early in the morning to begin her preparations for

departure. She was going, she must, but she would see him first. There were many things she wanted to tell him. She wanted to say that he was the truest man, with the purest heart, that she had ever known. She wanted to tell him that she did not mean some of the things she said in her anger; that he was not conceited, nor had too much self-assurance. It was merely that he was not like other men. He was more open-souled and great-hearted.

And she wanted to say he had been very kind always, and to thank him.

He was away before she came down, so she waited till dinner. She would see him then. At dinner some one said he had gone out of town on a business errand. He might return that night. The second morning she delayed her departure, hoping still to see him, and then when it was impossible to delay it longer, she went; but she went with tears in her eyes and an aching in her heart.

. . . . . .

She was back in the world again, her special world of many admirers and few true friends, of much pretence and little real. She was better than most of her world, but she enjoyed it in her way. She made much of the real and laughed at the pretence.

There was a man, a new-comer, who paid homage to her devotedly. He was very handsome (she had a weakness for handsome man), and he was brilliant in intellect and polished in manner. He had travelled much and he knew the world well, for he had lived in it nearly forty years. He was in every sense a man of the world.

He knew she would make his home a centre of culture and fashion, and their combined fortunes would make it a home of luxury. He liked to spend money on his surroundings, because he liked excessive comfort, and then he was more attractive among attractive surroundings. He was decidedly selfish and vain, this man. He had worse faults, too.

She, who prided herself on her ability to discriminate, who thought she could read men so well, failed here. Her eyes were blinded by his exquisite person and perfect address. A dozen men who had asked her to share their homes were better men than he.

And she married him. Not that she loved him. She admired

him greatly, and she longed for a real home, a resting place, as all women do, at least after they have passed a certain age. Perhaps, too, that ache in her heart was a little persistent, and, like many another, she took a way the least likely to remedy it.

They made a fine appearance, these two, and their home was all that could be desired. The taste and luxury of its appointments were not excelled by any in their world.

Now, the rest of this part of her story is the story of many another woman, and the briefest words may tell it.

They had nothing in common. Where love is, differences of sentiment and temperament may be adjusted, but where it is not there is no remedy.

He was an inordinate lover of show, of the superficiality and froth of existence. Life had deeper meanings for her. By degrees it dawned upon her that he had no sense of moral obligation, a man to whom everything was right that conduced to his pleasure or profit; that he lived a loose life; that he could bring into their home men and women of notoriously immoral lives, and enjoy their society; that he loved the gaming-table and the wine-room, and spent much of his time and money there; that he was decidedly of the earth, earthy, and that his only beauty was in his outward appearance; and her disgust, her abhorrence, were beyond measure. With all her worldliness, she had always been a Puritan in thought and life.

After four years there was a separation, then a divorce with its attendant sensation and notoriety, and, as if to crush her entirely, a scandal was connected with her name — a price that many a beautiful and innocent woman pays to society for being attractive.

Heart-sick, lonely, wearied with all the world, and much reduced in fortune, she went away into obscurity. She tried to take up some of the tangled threads of her past life, to be a worker in the world again, and forget herself. But her heart was not in the work, and she did not succeed in forgetting herself.

. . . . . .

A lover is a lover to a woman always. She thinks of him as he was. If she marries him and he is disappointing, she dreams of him as he was, and if she loves him, between the real and the dream, she manages to live quite happily. If she does not

marry him, in her mind he is always true, loving her and her alone.

This weary, heart-sick woman thought much about her boyish lover — "that stupid boy," she sometimes called him even yet — with her eyes overflowing. There had never been a time since they parted that he had been very long absent from her thoughts. The remembrance of him was a kind of steadying influence when the world was reeling about her, for, whatever the rest might be, he was unchangingly good and true. She heard of him at times. He had succeeded in his chosen work as much as she could have wished for him, and she knew well he would go steadily on to much greater success. Rumor said he had a very pleasant home, and that his mother and sister were there.

How she longed to see him. If she could see him she would tell him what she wanted to tell him nearly five years ago.

Perhaps he had heard of the scandal attached to her name! The thought terrified her — but only for a moment — then she smiled. *He* believe it! No, he would not! *He* knew her better.

She was sure that the burden of the five years and the weariness of her aimless life would roll away when she should look in his face. It was strange this feeling she had about him — it had a divine something in it. She felt as they may have felt who came to the Great Healer — sure that the touch of His hand would heal all ills. Why should she not see him? She would! She was impulsive yet.

And the time came when the impulse carried her across the intervening thousands of miles. The day was dying as she entered the city, but she would not wait till another day. No, not another hour. She found his address and ordered a carriage. As she was whirled rapidly through the streets she lived over those other days. Once she said, "What am I doing? It is an unusual thing for a woman to do! But ah! no matter! He will understand."

He was at home, walking in the garden near the entrance, and hearing the carriage approaching, went out to see who it was. She threw open the door and bounded out before they reached the gate. And it was wonderful — God knows it was wonderful — how sorrow and care and years fell from her at the sight of him. She ran to him, held out her hands to clasp his, and laughed merrily up into his astonished, wondering face.

"It is I, old friend! Don't you see? I have longed to see you, so I came. There were things I wanted to tell you — so many things."

He was silently regarding her, like one entranced. Perhaps the years had rolled from him too, and he was standing in another garden, with that same radiant, beautiful face before him, the same moon glorifying it. Then, suddenly remembering, he dropped her hands, and motioned her to a rustic seat.

"You were in the city," he said, quietly, "and — you came to see me. Thank you, old friend."

Her tongue kept its old merry, lively pace. She talked of the people they had known, of the place and its interests, of his work. And she asked numberless questions. He was very quiet, but she remembered, with a smile, that it had always been the order of things that she should talk and he should listen.

After a little she would tell him that she came just to see him all those miles, and those other things she would have said long ago.

A clear voice called his name. He started, as out of a dream, and called back, "Yes, I will be in soon."

"Your sister?" she asked.

"No, my wife," he said.

"Your wife?" she repeated, wonderingly.

"Yes. I — excuse me — I would introduce you, but she — we — heard some things — and — "

Was there a merciful God in heaven? One blow was enough! Here were two, like sledge-hammers, on her poor heart!

After awhile she said, in a dry, hard voice, "You heard things — and you believed them."

"I — could not do otherwise. It was so — evident, and there was no one who could contradict them. If you — if you will tell me — "

"It makes no difference. It doesn't matter," she said, drearily.

"What doesn't matter?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing! Nothing matters now."

She meant that it did not matter now whether she were innocent or guilty, since he had already condemned her without a hearing.

Another silence, and he said:

"You have not been happy?"

"I have not been happy," she echoed.

"And you are not happy now?"

"And I am not happy now."

"I must go," she said, rising suddenly. He laid his hand upon her arm. "If I could help you —" he began.

"But I tell you, you cannot help me," she said bitterly. "I had one hope left, and it failed me. There is no help in all the world. It is a dreary, dreary waste."

"God and time heal all wounds," he said, gently.

"I wonder if they do," and she gazed up at the stars as if for an answer.

He looked at her sadly, with tears she did not see.

It may have been because he once loved her; or that there was a shadow of his great love lingering yet. Perhaps, because it was his nature to be tender and kindly to all women; or that it was pathetic, the difference between the radiant creature of an hour ago, and this sad woman, who drooped as if she had received a mortal blow, but he put his arms about her, and kissed her forehead softly. Then he helped her into the carriage, and closed the door between them.

The Man Who Knew Smith.*

BY MARY AND ROSALIE DAWSON.

"OU old fox!" exclaimed Dick Wilson, looking up from his paper as the door opened to admit his friend and room-mate.

"What's up?" growled the newcomer, for a sudden shower had wet him through and he was in no mood to be trifled with.

"Oh, you might as well drop that, Smith," continued Wilson, digging him lovingly in the ribs. "She's let the cat out herself."

Smith ignored the tormentor and went in search of his slippers.

"Hilda Craig is a mighty pretty girl," pursued Wilson soothingly, "and, after all, it's no crime to be engaged."

The other man paused in the bedroom doorway and stared.

"What the deuce are you talking about?"

"Oh, come now, old man. It's too late for that bluff. Did she promise to keep it dark? I could have told you that the old ladies of the Dorcas Society at home could worm a secret out of the Sphinx. Just look at this little giveaway."

Smith took the copy of the *Sidon Sun* held out to him and read the paragraph indicated. He stared at it with a dazed expression. Then he read again — very slowly.

Sidon is a town of about two thousand inhabitants, and the *Sun* is its only local newspaper. Dick's aunt, the wife of the rector of St. Simeon's, sends it every week to keep her nephew posted on home news. The paragraph in question was as follows:—

> An engagement of much interest to Sidon is that just announced of Miss Hilda Craig, daughter of Mrs. Charles Chester Craig of West Green Street, to Mr. J. Dunlap Smith of Los Angeles, California. Miss Craig has just returned from New York, where she has been visiting her sister, Mrs. Alfred Keating. It is understood that she became engaged to Mr. Smith during her stay in the Metropolis.

"Well, who in heaven's name is Miss Hilda Craig, daughter of

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Mrs. Charles Chester Craig of West Green Street?" demanded Smith.

It required but a glance at the puzzled face opposite to convince Wilson that his friend was in earnest.

"Why, then you're not the man!" he said in bewilderment.

"Oh, I seem to be the man, all right. The question is, Who's the girl?"

"Hilda Craig is a very nice girl indeed. Very good looking. The Craig family is one of the oldest in the county."

"I should have been glad of a chance to decide those questions for myself. But, thank fortune! the matter was discovered in time. I might have waked up some morning and found myself married."

"Of course, there is only one solution," argued Dick. "You must have a double. Smith's not such an extraordinary name."

"There are pages of Smiths in the Los Angeles directory, but there was only one J. Dunlap Smith when I left there a month ago, and I hardly think we have increased since then."

"By Jove, old fellow, this begins to be exciting," cried Dick, enjoying the dilemma.

The affair certainly promised to develop some interest. Smith deliberated the matter that evening and determined to begin an investigation at once. The first step toward solving the mystery was taken the next morning, when he wrote a note to his maternal uncle, president of the Carpenters and Plumbers' National Bank, and took the train for Sidon.

Dick had urged facetiously that he go down *in propria persona*, and claim the lady outright, but Smith made it a rule of life to mislay much of his friend's proffered advice, and the name he signed to the register of the Dewey House was the euphonious one of Andrew N. Anderson. It was in this fictitious character that, later in the day, he presented himself at the rectory of St. Simeon's armed with credentials from Dick.

Mrs. Swann, the rector's wife, received him with a flutter of nervous importance which suggested that visitors from the Metropolis were something in the nature of an event in Sidon. She exclaimed hospitably against any friend of her nephew putting up at a hotel.

Dick had said that his aunt would certainly expect to entertain the stranger in Sidon and had urged Smith to accept. He had explained that it would really be conferring a favor, since, in a quasi-manless settlement like an up-state town, the very fact of having an unmarried and fairly prosperous young fellow under her roof would give a hostess a certain prestige.

But Smith had never visited in a parsonage. There was no knowing, he told himself, what restraints such a domicile might impose, and he held out for the hotel.

Mrs. Swann's very evident disappointment was apparently somewhat mitigated by the reflection that she would at least have the introducing of the new man to the girls of the town. She began at once to arrange for his entertainment. It was while she was eagerly detailing the plans for these hospitalities that he broached the subject of Hilda Craig and expressed a desire to meet her.

"Why, Mr. Anderson," she protested, "what kind of advice has Dick been giving you? Hilda is good-looking, of course, but we have ever so many pretty girls in Sidon — girls who are bright and attractive as well as pretty."

The young man hastened to clear his friend of the serious charge of not knowing a pretty girl from a plain one. He explained that he had noticed in a copy of the *Sidon Sun*, which she had forwarded to her nephew in New York, an announcement of Miss Craig's engagement to J. Dunlap Smith of Los Angeles. Dunlap, he explained, had been a classmate of his at college. He had lost sight of him of late and would welcome a chance of finding out what he had been doing with himself.

Mrs. Swann bobbed excitedly in her chair.

"Oh, then you know Mr. Smith!" she exclaimed. "Do tell me what he is like. You know Hilda became engaged in New York. No one in Sidon has ever seen him."

Smith answered evasively that Dun was a good enough fellow, as men went. Young and rather well off, he believed.

"Well off!" cried the rector's wife. "Why, didn't you know about the failure? His father lost everything only a few weeks ago."

He hadn't heard about the failure. The news was a trifle disconcerting.

"Oh, dear me, yes," she continued. "That's the reason Mr. Smith has never come to Sidon. His father collapsed as a result of business losses, and they despaired of his life for a while. Mr. Smith was obliged to hurry right on to California. Of course, the engagement will have to be a long one. Hilda says she will have to wait two or three years at least."

As they sat talking, the little garden gate opened from the outside, and that portion of the lawn which was visible through the vines of the porch became suddenly flecked with blue muslin.

Mrs. Swann reconnoitred around the corner of the porch railing and drew back wreathed in smiles.

"Are you a wizard, Mr. Anderson, or is this mental telepathy? You are going to have a chance to meet Hilda immediately. This is she now."

There was no time to warn his hostess against repeating what he had said before a tall girl in blue appeared on the porch steps. She carried a large paper-covered parcel. At sight of a stranger she hesitated.

"Don't let me disturb you, Mrs. Swann. I just stopped to bring you the — the undergarments for those poor Lynches," she stammered.

"Don't go, Hilda," the rector's wife interposed. "I want you to know Mr. Anderson of New York, a friend of my nephew, Dick Wilson. Mr. Anderson was just saying a moment ago that he should like to meet you. Mr. Smith was a classmate of his at college, and he is anxious to get some news of him."

The girl flushed painfully, and shot the stranger a swift, questioning glance. His expression was guilelessness itself, but at that moment he became convinced that there was no other J. Dunlap Smith hailing from Los Angeles. Somehow, he began to feel glad that it was so.

Although, as the rector's wife had said, his fiancée was not what every man would call a pretty girl, there was something decidedly attractive about her. Her figure was uncommonly graceful and well proportioned. She had nice brown eyes, which could be keen and merry on occasion, and a fresh, clear skin, tinted into warmth by a soft glow of health.

"I am so sorry I didn't know Dun was in New York, Miss

Craig," said the young fellow, with a convincing air of candor. "I wonder a little that he didn't look me up in town."

"Oh, you know he left New York very abruptly," murmured Miss Hilda. "His father was taken suddenly ill and he left within two hours. No doubt he intended looking up all his friends, but his stay was much shorter than he had expected."

At this point the Reverend Mr. Swann appeared and proceeded, after the manner of a small town, to press the stranger concerning his business in Sidon. He was informed, with a gratifying air of secrecy, that Mr. Anderson had come in the interest of a trust company to examine into the deeds of some property thereabouts.

The small size of the town and the many social events planned in his honor afforded Smith many opportunities for meeting Hilda Craig. All of these he embraced, creating others for himself. At first she tried to avoid him, but, as he made no further mention of her engagement, her manner became less unbending. The more he saw of her, the more mystified he became, and the more determined by every means in his power to win her confidence.

In the process of gaining her friendship he made several interesting discoveries about Miss Craig herself. First, that she was an eminently lovable person; that under her somewhat chilly manner throbbed a nature both warm and impulsive, and secondly, that they had many tastes in common. She seemed to share perfectly his passion for the rich old English classics, so much neglected nowadays. She was the only girl he had ever known who had read the "Religio Medici."

As the days went by they became good friends. So good, in fact, that he felt the worthy ladies of the Dorcas Society must sometimes question his loyalty to his friend, J. Dunlap Smith.

He postponed his departure from day to day. The visit which was to have lasted a week lengthened into a month. It might have lasted longer, but towards the end of the month his uncle's letters assumed a testiness of tone which indicated that the limit of his patience had been reached.

The eve of his last day in Sidon came without any solution of the problem. He was to leave for New York early in the morning. If he were ever to find out the particulars of his engagement, it must be done at once.

That evening he walked in a westerly direction across Green Street, resolved to question Miss Craig frankly about it.

He found her in darkness on one of those little vine-clad porches which abound everywhere in Sidon. It was just light enough for her pretty figure to be hazily visible. The only object he could discern at all clearly was the huge diamond in her engagement ring, which caught the little flecks of light drifting through the vines and flashed out quite glaringly in the gloom.

The visitor opened the conversation by explaining that he was to leave for New York early in the morning, and spoke of the delightful hospitality he had enjoyed in her town.

"But, before going," he added, "I have something to ask you. I think you can guess what I mean. You must know that I have always wondered at your engagement to Dunlap Smith. Won't you tell me what could have induced you to take such a step?"

He felt, though he could not see, her violent start of surprise, and would have given a great deal just then for a glimpse of her face. For the first time in his experience he found himself sitting with a nice girl on a dark porch and wishing for a light.

She did not answer for a moment. He fancied that she was twisting her engagement diamond into position where it caught the light and reflected it.

"What in the world makes you think there is anything strange in my engagement to Dunlap? Why shouldn't I be engaged to him?" she asked finally.

"Answer for answer," was the reply. "First, tell me the reason for your engagement. I will tell you afterwards how I know it is an unusual one."

She hesitated, laughing nervously. "I suppose I might as well admit, then, that it is a peculiar engagement," she said. "But I hardly know how to tell you — where to begin."

"Better begin at the beginning," he encouraged.

"The beginning," she said, with a ripple in her voice, "was Pennington Philips. You know Pennington, don't you?"

"Philips? Let's see. Short, fat fellow with eyeglasses, isn't he? The chap that wrecked half a dozen trains at Mrs. Gartner's dance the other evening?"

"Yes. That describes him. But his dancing isn't all there is

against him, even to a casual acquaintance. You might have identified him by mentioning his penchant for relating Hebrew and Celtic jokes out of the comic papers."

"I know whom you mean. I haven't seen much of him."

"No, Pennington isn't a man who would prove very companionable to you, I imagine. But I grew up with him. We've known each other for years and on that account I always tried to be very pleasant to him. It may have been because mother and I were more patient with his jokes than most people that he came so often to the house — once a week anyhow. But, often as he came, he felt it incumbent upon him to let me know on every occasion that his intentions were not of a serious nature. He never seemed to doubt for an instant that if he held out his hand I would jump for it. It was amusing at first, but in time it palled.

"Then, there was Thucydides Pierce. Thucydides hardly came to my shoulder. He was amusing enough to waste an hour on now and then, and I used to enjoy his calls well enough. But I never liked to go out with him, as our respective heights always excited merriment among the girls. He was just as colossally conceited as Pennington, although he had the grace to conceal it a little more. Well, in an evil hour Thucydides called upon me twice in the same day. (He came once to borrow my camera and again to return it, really.) I suppose some one must have seen him twice at our door and rushed around to his mother with the news. The next morning Mrs. Pierce came in. She mentioned to mamma (incidentally, of course) that her son could not afford to marry a poor girl under any circumstances. His father would not be able to leave him anything, as they lived up to every cent of their income, and Thucydides must look for a wealthy wife or remain unmarried.

"There were several others in between, but little Morry Bunting was the worst of all. Morry was just twenty. He'd recently left college and was earning six dollars a week. Morry was a nice child, with the makings of a man in him, and I always did like playing grandmother to boys of that age. His case was all Cousin Flossie's fault. She admitted afterwards that she'd been teasing him about me just to see his pretty blush. But when he came to call one evening with that rigid, resolute look in his face, I knew what to expect. He began with a long preamble, and then asked me if I'd

heard that idiotic report of his engagement to Sally Ames. When I assured him I hadn't, he informed me that he wasn't in a position to marry *any* girl at present.

"The irritating part of it all was that one dare not resent their conceit openly. The more atrocious it grew, the more necessary it seemed to treat them with agreeable forbearance. I began to realize that if I did not wish to become acid to every man in Sidon, I must adopt some preventive measures.

"The way out of my trouble suggested itself while I was visiting lately in New York. I happened to pass a shop window containing the Idaho Diamond Company's exhibition, with realistic stones at unrealistic prices. I stopped in a moment of inspiration and bought an engagement ring for three dollars and ninety-eight cents. After that the rest was easy. I chose the name of Smith as one that was not too distinctive. It was necessary to combine it with something well-sounding, so I adopted the name of Dunlap from a hat advertisement I saw in going up town. The J was just a little fancy touch to render it modish. I put my fiancé as far away from me as possible, and selected Los Angeles as a suitable place.

"When I first met you and heard that you knew a Mr. Dunlap Smith, I was terribly frightened. But when I found that you hadn't seen him in years, and that it wasn't likely you would see him soon, I decided not to — break my engagement."

"And may I ask," he demanded, "why in the world you haven't told me all this long ago?"

She moved uncomfortably in her chair and did not reply.

"Hilda, confess! Was it because you feared that I, too, might regard the acknowledgment as a danger signal, and give you warning?"

She broke down and laughed.

"I — I'm afraid it was," she admitted.

"Thank you. I am deeply obliged for your good opinion. And you really thought you could make any possible combination with the name of Smith and not find a citizen so christened in some American city," Smith added, laughing.

"Such a thing never occurred to me. But do tell me now," she added eagerly, "is there really a Mr. J. Dunlap Smith, and what is he like?"

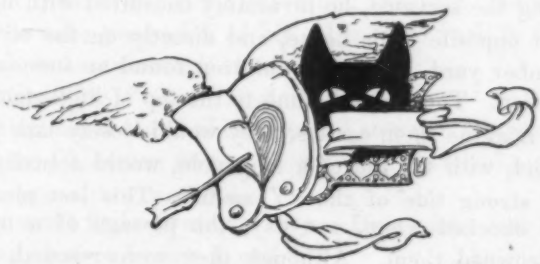
He broke it to her by degrees. He told her that there really was a J. Dunlap Smith, and that, about a month before her engagement was announced, he had come to New York to take a position in a bank of which his uncle was president.

When he added that Smith, under the name of Andrew N. Anderson, had come down to Sidon to investigate his engagement, and that, in doing so, he had fallen deeply in love with his fiancée, she was greatly startled and feigned some annoyance.

They talked the matter over at some length, however, and in the end he persuaded her to adopt his own way out of the difficulty, which was — to allow the statement in the *Sidon Sun* to remain uncontradicted.

When he was safely out of town and secure within the walls of the Carpenters and Plumbers' National Bank, Hilda broke gently to the good ladies of Sidon the fact that they had been entertaining her angel unawares.

The storm before which Smith had fled burst promptly. His conduct, he learned later, came in for the severest censure. As for Hilda, she narrowly escaped expulsion from the Dorcas Society. But the tempest is now beginning to subside.



The One Touch of Nature.*

BY ALICE E. BOSWELL.

HEY were two American children, who happened to be born in Hongkew, formerly the American settlement of Shanghai, China. Fun and adventure were no more lacking to them than if they had lived in a land of boys and girls who spoke their own language. Perhaps this is scarcely an exact statement, as they spoke the language of the land of their birth as fluently and as inelegantly as they did the Anglo-Saxon.

Their home was pleasantly situated on a well-kept, shady road, that bore the truly American title of Broadway. From their upper veranda one could see a good deal of the ever-busy river. Eddie knew before any other member of the household just what ship was at the bar and what manner of one she was. Alice, two years his senior, much begrudged him his superior knowledge, but was content to let the meaning of the black balls on the signal station remain a mystery to her. A girl of ten has more important interests to occupy her mind than purely mundane affairs. In matters of imagination she was conceded much cleverer than her brother. When Eddie wished to invent some new means of tormenting the servants, he invariably consulted with his sister.

Almost opposite their house, and directly on the river, was a large lumber yard, which the children found an immense source of attraction. They would climb to the top of high stacks of timber, and imagine them castles; they would loosely lash planks together and, with the aid of a long pole, would actually push off into the strong tide of the "Yangsti." This last pleasure was abruptly checked when, one day, the passage of a man-of-war nearly drowned them. Although they were rescued, their wet clothing bore witness against them, and they were forbidden, under threat of direful punishment "ever to do so again."

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They might have played in their own pretty garden, or ridden their velocipedes up and down the sidewalk, but, like grown-up specimens of their kind, they sighed for the forbidden pleasure. They moped for a day or two, and Mrs. Hazelton remarked to her husband, that she did "wish vacation was over."

It was Alice's natural resources that came to their relief. They had been standing on the high, graded road, idly watching some Chinamen at work in a low-lying rice field. Suddenly Alice's face lighted with purpose.

"I know what we can do. Just as soon as those men get through we will go down and play housekeeping in those graves."

"But mamma says we mustn't go down in the fields. It's awful muddy and we will get the fever."

"No, we won't. We can take some quinine afterwards, and then we'll be all right."

The men were already leaving, and in less than half an hour the place was deserted. Scattered here and there, in the midst of growing rice, were several old graves. The coffins had been placed upon the ground, and an arched covering of brick had been built over them. Time and neglect had caused the bricks to fall, and no native would be guilty of desecrating one by repairing or removing it.

Each child found one suited to its requirements, one end of each grave being sufficiently dilapidated to allow of entrance on hands and knees. Alice boldly crept into hers and was delighted with a number of little holes, which she called windows. Eddie was not so eager to take possession of his. He came back to his sister's and asked, in an awestruck voice:

"What's inside?"

"Nothing but a lot of old bones and stones. It's just lovely."

"If those Chinamen find us they will be dreadful mad. What do you suppose they would do?"

"They won't find us out, you silly. Hurry into your house and get it ready before I come to call."

Eddie had some difficulty in getting into his, as large bricks had blocked the way, and when he had removed them something black and shiny started towards him. His exit was rapid, if not graceful. Yelling, he ran to his sister.

"There's a great big dragon in mine."

"You're fooling," she said, looking more interested than credulous. His white face convinced her, and she added, "Well, we'll have to find another house for you."

"I don't want any," he declared. "It's getting dark; let's go home."

His sister's courage was as indomitable as her will.

"You must have another house, and if the dragon isn't too big, you can play St. George and kill it."

Eddie had no ambition to emulate that worthy champion, and gave vent to his fears so lustily that his sister desisted in her attempts to get a view of the dragon.

"Do stop that noise. They'll hear it up at the house and over in the village, too."

But she carried her point about selecting another grave to be his residence.

The next day the children returned to their weird playground as soon as it was deserted by the farmers. Eddie was now completely fascinated in their new game, and bravely seconded his sister in unearthing the dragon. It proved to be a harmless snake, which they ruthlessly killed.

A few days passed, delightfully exciting to the children, and then the Alexandrine craving for dominion affected them. They each wished to own many houses and rent them to imaginary tenants. This led them further afield and necessitated more precautionary measures against detection by the villagers. They followed a fairly wide stream through a bamboo wood and unexpectedly came across a high, square grave, in a much better state of preservation than the others.

"Isn't that a beauty?" whispered Alice, "but I don't believe we could get into it."

Fortunately, the children had not left the cover of the trees to inspect it closely, for, just then, they heard a noise and immediately a young Chinaman came into view from the opposite direction. The children stood motionless, and were thankful for the dusk. A Chinaman had no terrors for them under ordinary circumstances, but a consciousness of trespassing and the loneliness of the place filled them with a vague terror.

Apparently the newcomer was as loath to be seen as they, so stealthily did he advance. After looking about cautiously, he glided to the tomb and leaned against it in an attitude of assumed indifference; then he spoke. What he said was in too low a tone for them to hear, but the strangeness of the proceeding increased their fear.

"He is crazy, and he will kill us," breathed Eddie. Alice was still practical, if she were all goose flesh. "He can't kill us if he doesn't find us. Don't you dare sneeze."

But it seemed as if the young native had heard. He turned his face in their direction for a moment and was silent. The absolute quiet must have reassured him. He began to speak again and—horror of horrors—a voice from the tomb replied. Plaintive and faint it was, but unmistakable. Presently a hand was stretched forth, through an aperture, near the top of the little building. It held a small porcelain bowl, which the man took, and then with an impulsive gesture he pressed the hand to his neck. He said something in a tone of passionate yearning and sorrow. The voice answered more distinctly, but still the children could not hear the words. The man seemed cheered and, releasing the hand, drew a package from under one of his loose sleeves and placed it in the little bowl. Then he held it to the opening and the hand drew it in. Next he produced a basket-covered bottle and the hand reached out again and took it.

He was a good-looking fellow, and the children knew at a glance that he belonged neither to the servant class nor to the nobility. He talked a few moments longer, darted a suspicious look in the direction whence he had come, and started off. Sobs came from the grave, and he turned a pitying face, but went his way.

The little watchers dared not move for some minutes. Then, with one accord, they fled. Not until they had reached the road did they break the silence.

"Do you know what we have seen?" asked Alice, pantingly.

"Ghosts," replied Eddie.

"Only one," corrected Alice, "that man was probably its live relation come to feed it. Don't you remember the funeral Amah took us to see, where there were lots of good things for the spirits to eat?"

"I remember the roast chicken, all cooked hard and brown," he answered.

At dinner that night Mrs. Hazelton noticed the flushed faces and nervous manner of her children.

"You have been playing too hard again," she said, regretfully. "I wish you would take to reading more."

"We haven't been racing about much," Alice replied.

"Your idea of 'much' doesn't agree with mine, my dear."

At dinner that night Eddie looked up several times as if about to say something, but when his eyes rested on the Chinese "boy" who was serving them, he closed his lips resolutely. When they had come to dessert and the dignified servant had withdrawn, Eddie burst out with:

"Mamma, do we have to feed our ghosts like the Chinamen?"

Mrs. Hazelton was at the moment planning the details of a reception, and she answered her son absently:

"I don't know, dear."

If Alice had not been suddenly seized with a violent fit of coughing and had not shaken her head warningly at her brother, Mrs. Hazelton would have paid no further attention to Eddie's question. As it was, her interest was aroused.

"What was it you asked? About feeding ghosts? Don't you know, at your age, that there are no such things?"

"Alice and I have seen one," he asserted.

"Well, mamma, it was only a Chinese one," explained Alice. "Of course, any dunce ought to know," she added, looking at her brother, "that we Christians go straight to heaven or hell and only heathens have to lurk about their graves, until there's nothing left of them but bones."

"What horrible ideas!" exclaimed her mother, "and what do you mean by seeing ghosts? Where have you been?"

Then Eddie cheerfully recounted their recent exploits. Alice believed in treating "grown ups" with reticence, but even she admitted the truth of Eddie's statements.

"But it's simply impossible," said Mrs. Hazelton, aghast at their assertions.

When her husband arrived, she told him what the children had said, and asked, excitedly: "What do you suppose it was?"

"Alice's vivid imagination and Eddie hypnotized by it. They both deserve a severe punishment for disobeying you and going down on that swampy ground."

For once Mrs. Hazelton was indifferent to her children's ethical culture. She insisted that her husband should question them, and he was finally impressed by their evident earnestness.

"It is some deviltry among the natives. Perhaps they are imprisoning a culprit, or may be they are isolating a victim of contagion. If the children don't break out with smallpox or cholera, we may count ourselves lucky. However, it isn't our business to interfere."

"Really, you surprise me. A poor creature may be shamefully ill-treated and you say 'it isn't our business to interfere.'"

"My dear, I am tolerably popular with the villagers now, taking a friendly interest in their welfare and giving them medicines when necessary, but I would quickly deteriorate into an ordinary 'foreign devil' if I were to pry into their secrets."

"Very well, Edgar, but I shall not sleep a wink to-night, and to-morrow I will call in the police."

It was in vain that he tried to convince her that the foreign courts had no authority to deal with a native case that did not concern foreigners and that she would in no sense benefit the sufferer by losing her sleep.

Mrs. Hazelton waxed indignant and volubly expressed regret that the man she had married should prove himself so cold-blooded and unfeeling.

Finally, despairing of enjoying any peace in his own house, he offered to arm himself with a revolver and to investigate the place described by the children. His wife went with him.

It was moonlight, but a brisk breeze blew light clouds before the moon and so obscured it now and then. Mr. and Mrs. Hazelton had to grope their way in darkness through the young bamboo, but when they reached the edge of the clearing, all was bathed in a soft brilliance. They paused abruptly, for, distinctly visible beside the white tomb, were the forms of a man and a woman, who were conversing in subdued but cheerful tones. The man was holding a Chinese toilet box, so that his companion could see herself in its glass. Even in that imperfect light it was evident

that she was a pretty, plump little creature. She was arranging her hair with many dainty gestures of affectation.

"Rather healthy spirits," whispered Hazelton.

"They are lovers," said his wife, "how mean of us to watch them. Let's go."

"But this mystery of the tomb is still unsolved. I intend to see this thing through."

So they were spectators to the love making which was as absurd as any such, seen by unsympathetic eyes. The man tried to place the different hair-pins, and both laughed over his mistakes. They walked down to the creek, and she bathed her hands and let him dry them. As they sauntered back, hand in hand, she pointed towards the tomb, and lightly shuddered, but a smile still covered her lips. He answered her remark gravely, and her expression changed to seriousness. The man stooped to a half crouching position and entered the tomb; the girl leaned listlessly against the outside—a picture of utter dejection. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hazelton were filled with pity for her. Shortly the man emerged and drew after him two heavily padded quilts. He shook them out and felt them over carefully, as if to see if they were damp. Next he pulled out from the grave a straw matting and a little wooden stool, such as the natives use as pillows. After examining each article, he replaced it, and then turned to the girl. Reluctantly she went to him, and they stood a few minutes, her hands in his, while he talked in comforting tones. Then he gently led her to the entrance of the vault, and she sobbingly entered.

"The wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Hazelton, under her breath, "don't let him shut her in there."

"Wait, we will see what this fine gentleman proposes to do."

The young native was rapidly closing up the opening by piling brick on brick. Still the sobs continued, and the watchers had hard work to remain passive. When the girl was completely walled in, the man lingered over the tomb, saying something to her, but she made no answer. Suddenly he looked up to the moon and the watchers noticed that sorrow, as well as resolution, was stamped upon his face.

"He is not a bad-looking fellow," said Mrs. Hazelton, relenting.

"No, and he seems strangely familiar to me. But he must be

a villain to keep a woman entombed for his own gratification. Probably he is afraid of wife No. 1 and so keeps No. 2 or 3 hidden in this shocking manner. What an existence for her! She will die of fright and loneliness before the fever can claim her."

"See, he is going."

"Now it is time that we play our part. Follow me."

They stepped out into the open space.

"Halt, stop! Hi there!" called Hazelton.

The native turned with the suddenness of a shot, and a violent start passed over his body, but left him still and defiant. Calmly he awaited the foreigners.

"What thing you makee do?" asked Mr. Hazelton, in pidgin English. The man answered in very correct language:

"I take a walk, the same as you, Mr. Hazelton."

"What! Why, so it is what's-his name, Tongkinsin's son, that recently came into the office. I am sorry, Mr. Lorh Sing, that it happens to be with you I must cross swords, but there is no help for it, if you dare to interfere with my releasing the poor creature confined there."

"The young lady does not desire release, Mr. Hazelton," returned the native, coolly.

"Indeed! So I supposed. Those sobs sounded as if she were pleased to be laid away with the dead. No, my dear sir, not if you have bought and paid for her, shall she remain there to-night. I will take the affair before our consul, and we shall see if common humanity can be so outraged."

"Yes, and what will you then do with her? Give her back to her people to be sold to the devil? Believe me, she will die first."

The Chinaman's face had become drawn and white, and his eyes glittered like an animal's at bay. Hazelton was nonplussed.

"I give the sound of warning and you will indeed find a corpse within that tomb. Her death be upon your head."

"Hush," said Mrs. Hazelton, coming to the rescue. "We would not injure the girl, but seek to befriend her. Tell us her story, but first speak to her, that she may know we are not to be feared. Suspense and dread will drive her mad."

The young man's face softened and, stepping to the grave, he spoke. Mr. Hazelton seconded Lorh Sing's assurance in im-

perfect Chinese, and his wife regretted, for the first time, her inability to speak the language.

"Please let her out," she said to the Chinaman.

"I dare not, madam," he answered. "Should she be seen, she would be restored to her father, who has offered a reward."

"And what do you intend to do with her?" asked Mr. Hazelton, somewhat sternly.

"I would marry her, and now await a chance to escape upon some steamer. In another province we would be safe."

"Tongkingsin, your father, is a powerful man, both among your countrymen and mine. Surely he would assist you in any honorable desire."

"You speak truly," replied Lorh Sing, "but my father cannot help us in this, or he would lose caste. He is not of the rank of this young lady's father."

"He is a merchant prince," said Hazelton.

"Yes, but he is what you describe in your country as a 'self-made man.' It was his own brain and pluck that attained for him the influential position he now holds; this girl's father is quite unknown among you foreigners; he is ignorant and bigoted, but a Prince of the Blood."

"Can we not help them, Edgar?" asked Mrs. Hazelton.

"Certainly, but why should we? Perhaps the girl would be more benefited by returning to her own people. What Mr. Lorh Sing proposes to do holds no alluring prospect for her happiness."

Lorh Sing smiled bitterly.

"Perhaps Mr. Hazelton will think it better that she be sold to the noble to whom her father has promised her — a loathsome old man and a victim of opium. Believe me, sir," he continued, with dignity, "if there was any promise of happiness for her, I would take her back to her father's this very night and count my own sorrow as nothing. When I was a little boy of twelve I was page in her father's palace. One of my duties was to guard a winsome little mite of four years. It was my pleasure to delight her by making curious toys and inventing games. Her mother's plea that the little girl's feet might not be crippled, as is the custom among most of the nobility, was successful, and none rejoiced more than I. Our walks in the beautiful garden of her home continued un-

interrupted. Every clear day we ran joyfully on the little arched bridges over miniature lakes, we fed the goldfish, we caught butterflies, we tended the lilies and were never sad. Four years passed and then my father sent me to St. John's College. I secretly missed the companionship of my little charge, and on one or two occasions, when I went to pay my respects to her father, I managed to see her. At eighteen years I went to England and passed four years at Oxford. You know that I have been back less than a year and have entered the office of the company in which you and my father own. I had not forgotten the little lady I served in childhood, and, wishing to see how she fared, I called upon my former master. I repeatedly made excuses to go again and again, until once, happy chance brought us together. I found her more lovable at sixteen than she had been as a child. My feelings of an older brother changed to something stronger. She told me her mother had died and a certain coarse woman, who had been little more than a servant, had succeeded to that lady's place. This woman had a spite against Annee and was prejudicing her father against her. She had persuaded him to promise Annee to the miserable old man I have mentioned. I saw that she was not indifferent to me, and determined to save her from her dreaded fate and make her my wife. By feeing and intriguing I have gained possession of her. She has been in hiding four days and nights, and our hopes of escape are still unfulfilled."

"Does her father suspect you, Mr. Lorh Sing?"

"Yes, now. At first he accused the French sisters at the convent of harboring her. She passed some years with them, as her mother thought highly of education and her father was willing to please his wife on a subject to which he was indifferent. They have convinced him of their ignorance of his daughter's whereabouts and he has begun to have me watched. Therefore, it adds to our difficulty of getting away from Shanghai unnoticed."

"Trust to us, my dear fellow. We will manage it for you." Mr. Hazelton's manner changed from one of cold suspicion to cordiality. "Now we must get her out and up to the house."

The men set to work with a will and in half the time it had taken to build up the entrance, they had it down. Lorh Sing helped the maiden out, and she stood in pretty bashfulness before

the other two. Mrs. Hazelton greeted her warmly, and her kindness was received gratefully. The ladies were pleased to find they could converse with each other in French.

It was a simple matter for Mrs. Hazelton to install the Lady Annee in her guest chamber, but much more difficult to allay the suspicions of the servants and satisfy the curiosity of the children. Mrs. Hazelton decided to take the latter into her confidence and they were greatly elated to think they had unearthed a genuine romance. The servants were casually told that the guest was the daughter of a very powerful nobleman who lived in the North of China, and whose favor was of great value to the master of the house. So Lady Annee was waited upon with abject humility by the servants, while the children showered their devotion.

All went well until the day the young couple were to embark. The Lady Annee had been in the Hazelton's home some four or five days before they could contrive for the lovers to leave the city. Mr. Hazelton had told at the office that he was particularly desirous of finding an opening in their company for a young native. Tongkingsin informed him of a vacancy in the Tientsin house, which his protegé might fill, little suspecting that the young man was his own son.

"Of course, he will know when his son disappears from here; but we have nothing to fear from the old gentleman as long as we don't drag him into the affair," said Hazelton to his wife. "I have spoken to Capt. Pierson, so he will be prepared to have them for passengers. They will go first-class, in the foreign cabin."

"Too bad they can't be married before they sail," said Mrs. Hazelton.

"Oh, they will be soon enough when they reach Tientsin. Lorh Sing is ready to have a Christian wedding, as he knows the young lady is a Christian at heart, although she has not been allowed to practise her religion since she left the convent."

Mrs. Hazelton had used the check she had received from Mr. Lorh Sing, to great advantage; the bride-to-be was well supplied with satins and brocades.

The *Haeting* was to start at four o'clock. Mr. Hazelton promised that Lorh Sing should be on board at three, and charged his wife to see that the Lady Annee reached the wharf in time.

Promptly at three o'clock Mrs. Hazelton left home in her brougham, accompanied by her charge who, delighted to be out-of-doors again, made her protectress quite nervous by constantly peering out of the window.

They passed the foreign suburban residences and gained the more crowded portion of Hongkew, where the Chinese had rebought most of the principal thoroughfare from the Americans and erected large shops. As they hurried through this noisy, disagreeable quarter, they suddenly heard the clanging of gongs, and caught sight of the red and yellow banners of a procession.

"It is a wedding," exclaimed Lady Annee, in French, thinking, perhaps, of her own approaching nuptials.

"No, I think it is merely a mandarin," answered Mrs. Hazelton, after looking out.

The swarm of native soldiers, attendants and chair-coolies brought the carriage almost to a standstill just as the huge, covered chair, borne by twelve coolies and containing the mandarin, came into view.

Mrs. Hazelton could see the petty potentate quite plainly, and noted his large, tortoise-shell-rimmed spectacles and long, drooping, scraggy moustache.

"He is an old grandfather," she remarked, "and dreadfully cross, I'm sure."

Her companion laughed and looked out, but instantly, with a scream, threw herself down on the floor of the carriage.

"My father!" she gasped.

In the same moment the old mandarin saw and recognized his daughter. With the expression of a cat about to seize its prey, he beckoned to the nearest soldier.

Mrs. Hazelton involuntarily shuddered. After all their painstaking, was their careful plan to miscarry?

"Drive on!" she called sharply to Mowfoo, her coachman, as she leaned from the window and saw a native red-coated soldier grasp her horse's bridle. "Take your whip and lash the man."

But the Chinese coachman had seen the sign to halt made by a mandarin, whom he instinctively held in awe, and he drew his whip reluctantly.

Mrs. Hazelton did not hesitate an instant. Leaning far for-

ward, she snatched the long, heavy whip from the driver and swung it with a swift whirl, bringing it down upon the haunch of the horse, who plunged viciously, shaking off the unready and amazed soldier, and broke into a frantic run. To save themselves, all in the vicinity made way.

Evidently Mowfoo wished to be on the winning side, for he now urged the horse to the top of its speed, steadily increasing the lead over the pursuing soldiers, who luckily were all on foot. By the time the bridge to the English Concession was reached, there were but two red-coated, perspiring soldiers following. The carriage reached the fashionable "Bund," still at a breakneck speed, and a Sikh policeman started out from one of the gates of the Public Garden. Again Mowfoo laid on the whip his mistress had returned to him, and the dignified official was soon left far behind. As they dashed across the second bridge, leading to the French Concession, Mrs. Hazelton once more looked back — and smiled happily. No soldiers were anywhere in sight.

The little Lady Annee released her nervous clasp of Mrs. Hazelton's hand and leaned back with a sigh of relief. They had not spoken to each other since their peril began.

Mrs. Hazelton pointed to the wharves and looked at her watch.

"See, that is the *Haeting* over there. In fifteen minutes it will sail, and you will be beyond your father's reach!"

When the foam-flecked horse walked docilely down on the busy wharf, and Mr. Hazelton led them on board the steamer to where Lorh Sing awaited them, centuries of inherited stolidity were not proof against such an occasion, and the young lover broadly smiled his satisfaction.

"We will never forget our two good friends!" he said, as he kissed Mrs. Hazelton's hand in most approved European fashion.

"I wish we were going too," said Mrs. Hazelton, as the warning to go ashore was given.

"I wish so too, madam," replied Lorh Sing, gravely.

The steamer had swung away from the wharf and was in midstream when the Hazeltons entered their brougham.

"Mowfoo must have a five-dollar 'cumshaw,' said Mr. Hazelton, when his wife had related their narrow escape from the mandarin. "It will make him forget, if he should ever be asked questions."

"By all means," replied Mrs. Hazelton, "but I do not think he will be questioned. The old mandarin saw my face but a second; all white people, no doubt, look alike to him, as all Chinamen once did to us, and our carriage is like hundreds on the 'Bund.'"

"Quite true, my dear," said Mr. Hazelton, "and it is very doubtful if he would make trouble for us now, even if he discovered our identity. The case would have to be tried in an English court, and a conservative Chinese prince would not demean himself in the eyes of his countrymen by submitting his complaint to a foreign judge. If he should take the affair before our consul, and especially if we forced him to take it up to the American minister at Pekin, that would involve so much more intercourse with the detested 'foreign devils.'"

Mrs. Hazelton laughed. "With due respect to the charming little lady's disagreeable old parent," she added, "I doubt if his imperial relatives would consider him of sufficient importance to entangle themselves in foreign complications on his account!"

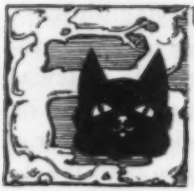
. . . . . .

When the Japanese-Chinese war broke out, Lorh Sing and his happy little wife had been living some time in Tientsin, in moderate circumstances. Tongkingsin was very active in bringing about peace negotiations and, in recognition of his services, the imperial authorities offered to bestow a governorship upon him. The wily old gentleman modestly declined the honor, but intimated that he should feel more than repaid, if his son should wed the Lady Annee, daughter of the illustrious Prince Yianhang of Manchu.

This favor was immediately granted and, pursuant to one of the wonderful fictions of Oriental etiquette, the fact of the lady's abduction was entirely ignored, both families entering into the usual formal negotiations as if the Lady Annee were still under the parental roof. The amount of her dower was decided by an imperial decree, and the heart of old Tongkingsin rejoiced to have his son and his son's wife return to Shanghai, to live as befitted their rank.

The Beloved Plymouth Rocks.*

BY JOHN LOUIS BERRY.



UMPETY—bumpety—bump!

The engine with its solitary car came to a sudden halt. The solitary passenger with the solitary gripsack, after a precipitous embrace of the seat in front, picked up his pivot tooth as a grim memento of the occasion, and stalked portentously out on the platform.

"What's the matter?" he asked impatiently.

"Washout," was the brief reply of the brakeman, as he ran towards the engine.

The solitary passenger — not forgetting his gripsack — followed at a more leisurely pace. It was a washout with a vengeance. A solid chunk of earth fifty feet square had been scooped out as artistically as if with a giant berry spoon. On either side the rails dangled quite pitifully.

"When can we go on?"

The engineer looked up, dazed. The nightmare spell of the throttle still held him. "To-morrow: It's a case of relief train all the way from Leadville."

"To-morrow?" The passenger looked at the car, and the men, and then at the gripsack. "Good night," he said. And he struck across the plateau towards a handful of cabins huddled on the mountain side. "To-morrow," he muttered, "always to-morrow! It was 'to-morrow' when I missed the boat at Yeddo, and the train at 'Frisco. It was 'to-morrow' when I lost my way in that cursed Arizona desert. It is 'to-morrow' now that I am locked up in these thrice-cursed Rocky mountains." He glanced at the gripsack, then furtively over his shoulder at the trainmen. Still half-dreaming, their eyes were fixed on the death trap before them. The traveler shrugged his shoulders and strode on.

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The glow of a savage sunset was making a glory of the brown and naked mountains. Even the sage brush looked less cold in the slanting crimson, and the yuccas less livid. Hell Gate, the breathless curve of the railroad, stood out black, dominant, like a veritable and inevitable ingress for lost souls — and, gazing at it, the man smiled grimly. He might have thanked God instead. For if the washout had been at Hell Gate — well, a trifling drop of five hundred feet into the raging waters of the Frying Pan. "It's Fate," the man said aloud, with a kind of choking joy, tightening his grasp on the gripsack. "I'll be getting sweet on religion if this keeps up."

He drew near the cabins. Only one seemed occupied. A sickly streak of smoke was issuing from the chimney, and a flock of Plymouth Rocks were going to roost in a shed hard by. They were about as fine specimens of the celebrated speckled and yellow-legged breed as could have been found at a Kansas City poultry show — but the traveler had no eye for chickens. He looked at the mysterious gripsack, then at the cabin, and hesitated. Then he knocked on the door. An oldish man in jumper and overalls answered the summons — a man who might have posed as "Weariness" to a painter.

"Barnaby!"

"Wulff!"

The oldish man in the doorway recoiled as if struck, then, recovering, tried to hold out a trembling hand. The traveler, on his side dropped his gripsack — almost. He came to just as it was sliding, sliding. He clutched it with the fingers of murder, then, flushing, smiled nonchalantly and offered it to the master of the cabin.

"I've come to see you," he said easily. "It's as much of a surprise to me as to you. But you are not the less glad, I hope?"

"Come in," said Barnaby. "I thought you were dead." He put the gripsack in a corner and motioned his guest to a seat. "How did you get here? This place is out of the world."

"Washout. I am laid over here until to-morrow."

"Till to-morrow? Then you —"

"I want to stay all night? Exactly. Can you accommodate an old friend?"

At that moment a woman entered the cabin by the rear door. She was small and spry, with bright black eyes and scanty black hair. Her duck skirt was short. Her shoes were of heavy calfskin. Her hat was a man's sombrero. On one shoulder she carried a gun. Slung over the other were a dozen dead chipmunks.

"My wife," Barnaby said. "Wife, this is Dick Wulff."

Wulff rose. There was something about this small, wiry woman he did not quite like. Perhaps it was her smile. Perhaps it was the directness of her eyes. Perhaps it was her gun. She came forward with outstretched hand anyway.

"I knew Wulff a long time ago," Barnaby added quietly.

Mrs. Barnaby halted half way. Her hand fell to her side. "Long ago my husband's best friend proved to be his worst enemy," she said. "He has never told me his name. It may be that that man is you." She turned and left the room.

"Of course you will stay overnight," Barnaby hastened to say. "She will have supper ready at once."

There was something ghastly about that supper. True, the biscuit and bacon were prosaic enough, but the silence of Mrs. Barnaby was a thing to startle and almost terrify. Besides, Barnaby kept his gaze fixed upon his visitor with irritating persistence, and before the meal was half over the spluttering candle went out, leaving them in darkness save for the moonlight. Mrs. Barnaby made no attempt to get another light, and Wulff, to whom darkness was a dread conjurer, cursed his foolishness in leaving the car. Through the window he looked out at the night, planning. The moon had toned down the barbaric beauty of the mountains, and now found its twin in the unruffled waters of a lake not far from the cabin.

"That is Loch Ivanhoe," remarked Barnaby suddenly. "They ought to call it the Lake of Lost Hopes."

"This is a God-forsaken place," Wulff rejoined, glad to say something. "Why do you stay here?"

Just then Barnaby had a fit of sneezing. For a moment he could not speak. "This is the reason I stay here," he answered at last. "Asthma keeps me in this high altitude. We are almost eleven thousand feet above the sea. Even up here I have to resort to chloroform every now and then."

"What do you do up in this eagle's eyrie for a living?"

"Nothing. We don't live."

Wulff rose suddenly from the table. "I am tired and sleepy. If you don't mind, I think I'll go to bed."

"As you like. My wife will be here in a moment."

Wulff looked around, startled. Keen as were his senses, he was not aware Mrs. Barnaby had left the room. At that instant there was a loud clatter in the yard.

"She is fixing the chickens for the night," Barnaby explained. "They are all she has — her chickens and her gun."

"Her gun! A queer pet for a woman."

"Aye — and she knows how to use it."

"You were not married to her when — when I knew you."

"No. I had a spell of brain fever after you left. She nursed me through it and saved my life."

Wulff hesitated a long time before asking the next question. "Does she — does she know?"

"No —" Barnaby raised his hand to his head. "I scarcely know myself. That is, I forget. You see, the brain fever —' He sighed hopelessly, "I only know, Wulff, that you are to blame for it all."

"Hush!" whispered Wulff, glancing around the room apprehensively. "It was all a mistake. I had your good at heart —" he hurried to the window, fancying he spied a moving shadow in the moonlight. The white landscape lay motionless and deserted before him. And just then, to add another ghostly touch to the incidents of the evening, Mrs. Barnaby appeared, apparition-like, in the doorway. If she had been listening, she was quicker than a cat, for it was a good ten yards from the window to the door. But she smiled quietly, and soon ushered him into the rude, yet clean, little room he was to occupy.

"Good night," Wulff said pleasantly. "Ah, I forgot — my gripsack." She turned on the instant. "I am wedded to my nightgown," he said jokingly to Barnaby. "Thank you —" as Mrs. Barnaby returned. He put out his hand for the gripsack. She let it fall to the floor.

"I beg your pardon for my awkwardness," she said, stooping to pick it up.

But he had picked it up before her. "Good night," he growled, slamming the door.

Far into the night Barnaby and his wife talked.

"You must go to bed now," she said at last. "You are tired."

"And you?"

"In a little while. I have some mending to do first."

She tucked him in as she would a baby. "And it was between five and six thousand dollars?" she asked.

"Yes, in gold dust. We had been mining together. That was our combined pile. He sneaked away in the night with the whole of it. He wrote me a nice fairy tale afterwards. He said he had invested the money for my benefit. Of course the investment was a failure. I never got a cent from the dust it took me nigh onto five years to pan."

Mrs. Barnaby laughed quietly to herself as she threaded her needle. She darned her husband's socks diligently for an hour or more, humming softly the while, then, sticking the needle methodically into the cushion, rose. "The investment was a failure," she said aloud. "That's too bad."

. . . . . .

Wulff dreamed he was dreaming—and perhaps he was. But the woman standing beside his bed was not a dream-woman. Her smile was too real for that. When she had held the chloroform to his nostrils quite long enough she proceeded at once to business. The gripsack lay innocently under the bed. She opened it. After a careful search she found several articles of wearing apparel, a newspaper, a magazine, an orange and a small box. The box was a rather unusual affair. It was covered with black cloth inside and out, and divided into four compartments. More significant still, it was empty. Mrs. Barnaby replaced the articles, then softly approached the sleeping man. The moonlight fell upon his face. Even under the spell of sleep, and in the transforming radiance, it was a cruel, evil face, reminiscent of past crimes, prophetic of future ones.

Softly, stealthily, Mrs. Barnaby reached under the pillow. Nothing was there. She looked under the edges of the mattress — nothing. She looked at the foot — nothing. She gazed out into the night, thinking. Then, without the least hesitation, she

reached under the bed covers, put her hand into the breast pocket of the sleeper's gown and drew forth something wrapped in a handkerchief. Then she left the room.

A half hour later a sudden pistol shot broke the stillness, followed by the frightened screams of a woman. Barnaby leaped out of bed and found his wife in the open doorway, with the still smoking pistol in her hand. Wulff was by her side almost as quickly.

"It was a thief," she said. "I shot at him. See, he is just disappearing over the edge of the hill."

Wulff muttered a curse.

"Have you lost anything?" she asked.

Without answering, he hurried back into his room. In a moment he reappeared in hat, shoes and trousers.

"Take my pistol," she said.

He snatched the weapon and dashed out.

"I wish you success," she called cheerily, watching him descend the hill and merge into the shadows of the valley.

"What did he lose?" asked Barnaby, still dazed.

"How should I know?" she answered impatiently.

When, in the gray of the morning, Wulff returned, she was standing outside the cabin, surrounded by her prize Plymouth Rocks.

"Well?" she queried.

"I discovered no trace of him," he answered gravely, "not even a footprint in the sand."

"He was a clever fellow," she said, smiling. "I find some silver knives and forks missing. I hope you lost nothing valuable?"

He gazed at her with knitted brows. But he did not reply.

She had a large pan of chicken feed in her hand, and the feathered pets were clamorous in their hunger. One rooster, a favorite evidently, a fine fellow with a blazing comb, even made bold to fly up and perch upon her shoulder. She stroked him caressingly, then bent down and placed the pan on the ground. The fowls "fell to" with all the amazing gusto of their species.

"They enjoy it so," she said musingly.

"Mrs. Barnaby," began Wulff suddenly, but quietly. "I have lost six thousand dollars' worth of unset diamonds. Kindly search, will you? I have a notion that you can find them for me."

"What do you mean?" she asked, as quietly on her side.

"I mean that your 'robber' is too big a mouthful to swallow. Now give me back my diamonds. I'm not particularly fond of practical jokes."

She laughed good-humoredly, "I am, Mr. Wulff. This one is especially rich."

"I shall search the premises."

"Go on."

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Barnaby, emerging from the cabin.

"Mr. Wulff is a bit excited," she answered gently. "He has lost some diamonds."

With a muttered oath, Wulff strode into the cabin.

"This is an outrage," protested Barnaby.

"Let him do as he likes. We have nothing to fear."

Wulff began his search without more ado. First he examined the room in which he had slept — peered under the old-fashioned rag rugs, hunted through the drawers, sounded the walls for hidden doors. Next the kitchen received his attention, then the dining room, then the Barnabys' bed chamber. He was engaged over an hour in this one room. He delved recklessly into Mrs. Barnaby's wardrobe, emptied the drawers, tore up the carpet, turned the furniture upside down. But his search was futile. Next he went outside — sniffed for freshly turned earth, made a tour of the out-houses, even poked his head into the chickens' quarters. Mrs. Barnaby looked on smiling.

"Are you satisfied now?" she queried.

"No — I haven't searched you yet."

"This is monstrous!" exclaimed Barnaby.

"Hush," she rejoined quietly. "Come, Mr. Wulff."

Five minutes more, and Wulff had searched them both, finding nothing. It was certainly a humiliating ordeal, but Mrs. Barnaby made no murmur. She seemed determined to prove her innocence at any cost.

A sudden whistle echoed down the valley. The relief train from Leadville was coming at last. Wulff bade his host and hostess good-bye calmly, smilingly.

"There is a mystery about it," he said, "and, being of a curious

turn, I'm sorry I can't stay here and solve it. As for the diamonds — I don't know that I am wholly sorry they are gone. They were a source of great anxiety and —" with a shrug — "there are plenty of rubies and emeralds left in the world."

Mrs. Barnaby looked him straight in the eye. "Perhaps you count it a misfortune that you lost the diamonds. You should count it a blessing instead. The easiest way to get rid of a load is to lose it."

"What do you mean?"

"If you came by the diamonds as dishonestly as you came by my husband's gold dust years ago, the finding of them in your possession might prove awkward for you. Good day."

He smiled and tipped his hat. "Au revoir, little woman. You deserve a cleverer husband than my late partner, Mr. Barnaby."

She watched him go down the hill and board the train. She waited until the train pulled out. Then she took the axe and went to the chicken house.

"What are you going to do?" Barnaby asked.

"Commit murder."

"Are you going to kill the chickens?"

"Yes. You hold them while I chop off their heads."

Barnaby did not ask her reason. He knew she had one.

In five minutes it was all over. Through streaming tears Mrs. Barnaby gazed at her decapitated pets, then bade her husband fetch her the butcher knife. In a moment she had opened their craws. Among the pebbles, bits of glass and general refuse contained therein the astonished Barnaby saw a number of small round crystalline stones, dazzling in the sunlight.

"What!" he gasped. "You don't mean it?"

"I do mean it," she replied, smiling. "Chickens like diamonds just as well as common pebbles. And don't you think I found a good hiding place?"

For Her Father's Sake.*

BY ALBAN E. RAGG.

TICK! Tick! Tick! Tick! reiterated the clock with monotonous persistency, reminding those present that the time for retiring was long since past, but the old farmer and his daughter stayed on, regardless of the fleeting hours. Neither had spoken for fully thirty minutes. The man, reclining in a high-backed arm-chair, was comforting himself with a black clay pipe, and the woman sat gazing listlessly into the fire, an open letter in her hand.

"'Tis ten years to-night since mother died," she remarked sadly. A sudden strong gust of wind shook the door of the outhouse, making it creak mournfully as it swayed to and fro on its rusty hinges. The old man stirred uneasily in his chair, and glanced nervously behind him.

"Yes, it's ten years to-night," he replied, with an effort to appear at ease.

Both again lapsed into silence. Presently the old man glanced across at his daughter and said:

"Who did the letter come from, Mary?"

"From William Dutton, father."

"William Dutton, eh! Why, it's many a long day since you heard from him. What's he been doing with himself since he went away?"

"He wrote to tell me that he's just been married, father," the woman replied, and although she tried to speak calmly and bravely, a sympathetic ear would have distinguished the sound of unshed tears in her tremulous voice.

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"Married, eh," the old man remarked with a chuckle. "Well, well, the Book says it is not good that a man should be alone. He was a nice young fellow, and I trust he has found a good woman."

"So do I, father," replied his daughter very gently.

"Mary."

"Yes, father."

"It has often been a puzzle to me that you and him never made it up. I always thought he was kind o' fond of you, but women's queer creatures; they let a good man go, and pine after a fool who doesn't care a button top for 'em."

The woman made no reply, but holding up the letter read it through carefully for a second time.

> MY DEAR MARY—I've took you at your word; you said it was no use waiting, and I began to reckon it wasn't, so I married a little girl I met down here last year. It was kind of lonesome, coming back night after night to cold, cheerless lodgings, with never a soul to smile at a man, and I'm fond of company, you know. I tried to bear up and told myself that I had no right to marry any other woman; if I felt lonesome, why, you felt lonesome too, and it wasn't your fault. Then one night coming home from Chapel meeting, all of a sudden I took hold of her hand and asked her to marry me. That's how it all happened, and we were married two weeks ago to-day. She's a kind-hearted little thing, and can't do enough for me.
>
> Good-bye, my dear friend. Don't think any less of me. My best respects to your father.
>
> Your sincere friend,
> WILLIAM DUTTON.

"Mary."

"Yes, father."

"What did you keep him hanging on for all those years, if you didn't intend to marry him? I didn't like to say anything about it at the time, but now it's all past and gone, I must say you treated him shabby. He was a good enough man for you, wasn't he?"

The woman's face twitched painfully, and she answered in an almost inaudible whisper:

"Yes, father; he was a very good man, but I couldn't marry him, and that's all about it."

"You couldn't marry him, and, pray, why not?"

"I just don't want to say any more about it, father; he's married now, and there's the end of the whole business."

"All right, Mary; as you please, as you please, but the day will come when you won't have any one to look after you, and as you've been a kind girl to me, I'd like to see you comfortable

with some good man before — before —" The old man stopped abruptly, and glanced up timidly at his daughter.

But she didn't appear to have heard what he said, for she sat staring at the blazing log, thinking, thinking, thinking of the past and of possibilities now lost forever.

. . . . . .

Five years ago William Dutton had come to make his last appeal to her to marry him. He was employed on the railway and had received a good appointment in Chicago, and he came either to obtain her promise to marry him or to say good-bye.

Five years ago! It seemed like five hundred. How hard he had striven to overcome her conviction that to marry him would be contrary to what she felt to be her duty towards her father.

"Let him come with us," he said.

"No; it would break his heart to leave the old farm; he'd never consent," she replied sadly.

Then William Dutton, driven to desperation, cried angrily:

"Seems to me he's a selfish old man. Parents is everlastingly talking about the duty of children, but they mostly forget the duty of parents."

"Hush, Will; he never tried to make me stay. I never even spoke to him about it. I couldn't, you know, because I promised mother when she died that I would never leave him alone."

"Then you have quite made up your mind, have you?" he said in a strained voice.

"Yes, Will; but don't speak unkindly to me. God knows it's hard enough to let you go without having you angry with me."

And with a sob she laid her head on his shoulder, and he stroked her hair and spoke a few kind, gentle words of affection.

Suddenly an overwhelming desire to choose the happier lot took possession of her. For an instant she wavered. Then, with one supreme effort, she held herself erect, and cried:

"Leave me, leave me now, there's a man, and God be with you."

He glanced into her eyes and saw that there was no hope.

"Good-bye, Mary," he said mournfully.

Like one turned to stone she watched his retreating figure.

"Will!" she gasped in an agony of grief, "Will! Come

back!" But he was already beyond earshot. An hour later he left the village.

. . . . . .

"Mary, hand me down the Bible, will you?" asked her father. She walked over to the shelf, took down the book, and placed it in the old man's hands.

Slowly he turned over the pages until he came to the Book of Proverbs. Then half aloud he read:

> Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is above rubies.
> The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.
> She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.
> She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

"'Tis a wonderful book, a wonderful book," he muttered. Then glancing up furtively at his daughter he inquired in a tone of voice that sounded almost anxious:

"Mary, I've been a good father to you, haven't I?"

"Yes, father, you've always been good to me," she replied, evidently surprised at this unusual remark from her father, who had exacted so much and given so little in return, but then he was a lonely old man, and never meant to be selfish and mean and unreasonable, she thought.

"I wonder how you'll get along without me, Mary," he continued, and his voice shook perceptibly.

"Hush, father; you must not talk like that; you'll last for many a long day yet."

The old man chuckled to himself.

"I wasn't thinking of dying, Mary," he replied significantly.

"That's right, father. Why, you're a younger man than many a one half your age," she remarked cheerfully.

"Do you think so? Do you think so, daughter?" A look of eager hope came into his eyes.

"Of course I do; any one with half an eye can see that," she said in a tone of mild surprise.

"Mary, I've got something I want to tell you. I've been trying to make up my mind for the past six weeks, but I never knowed quite how to do it."

"What is it, father? You are not ill, are you?" she inquired anxiously.

"No, daughter; never felt better in my life."

"By the way, how long is it since Harry Johnston died?" he asked.

Mary glanced up in astonishment. "About two years ago," she said. "What made you think of him, father?"

"I was just wondering. I met his widow to-day when I was down at the market. It seems he left her two thousand dollars with the farm."

"Did he, father? I am glad to hear it, for she was a good, kind wife to him."

"So the neighbors say; so the neighbors say," he remarked hastily.

"What were you going to tell me just now, father?" Mary asked.

"I — I — I was — going — to — to tell you that I am going to marry Harry Johnston's widow," he blurted out. "I just wanted to know what you thought of her."

"Father!" she cried, and her face lost all its healthy glow. She stood staring at him in a strange, vacant manner as though unable to realize what he meant.

"Well! Well!" he remarked testily. "What have you got to say against it?"

"Nothing, father. Do whatever you think is for the best."

Both remained silent for a moment. The clock struck eleven. The old man got up out of his chair.

"Guess it's time to go to bed," he remarked.

"Yes, father; I reckon it's about sleeping time," the woman answered wearily.

A MARCONI OPPORTUNITY

BY
HERBERT WALLACE

THE announcement that the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America has decided to release a part of its treasury stock for the purpose of securing additional working capital for the development of the system and the completion of plans for commercial operations will be particularly gratifying to the many readers of this magazine who believe in Marconi and his work. The information follows close on the news of the accession of Edison to the ranks of workers in the field of Marconi wireless telegraphy — a fact which is additional assurance that the Marconi system is an undoubted commercial success. Marconi himself has successfully gone through three great stages of endeavor — discovery, invention, and development — and it is fitting that now should come his reward.

The United States in the Field

When Marconi reached the point in his wireless telegraph operations where he could wave a message across the Atlantic from England to this country, it became evident that these United States would shortly become one of the most profitable fields for wireless telegraph operations. Our country does an enormous telegraph business with Europe; our trade with Cuba, Porto Rico, the Philippines, and Alaska makes us more and more a world power, and it is not too much of a dream to conceive of "Marconigrams" as the daily means of communication from our shores to our various possessions and other countries over the seas. There was additional reason for an American Company in the need for direct care of the wireless telegraph service on American merchant marine, on overland operations, and particularly that immediate charge might be had over the installations to be made on the Pacific, over the work in Alaska, Cuba, Hawaii, and over the American share of the trans-Atlantic business.

What Marconi has done

Most people do not know that Marconi has been making constant experiments for almost nine years; that over one hundred patent claims cover all phases of his inventions in every country which affords legal protection to the inventor; that the English company has been developing the system for the past six years; and that now the business is a factor of the commercial world in that it is carried on regularly and profitably. The great shipping agency of Lloyds has contracted for its use for a period of fifteen years, and has already installed the system on over fifty of its land stations in all parts of the eastern hemisphere. The Italian and British navies use the system regularly on their warships. Thirty trans-Atlantic passenger steamers are equipped with the instruments and now report their safe arrival a day ahead of getting into port. "Wireless reports of passing ships" is an operation carried on by land stations here and in England, and has been a feature of news in leading daily papers for nearly two years. This is a partial story of accomplishment up to the present. As Andrew Carnegie once remarked of Marconi: "No one can tell or even dream of what tremendous things he will be able to do in a few years."

The American Company, organized a year ago, has been working quietly but effectually. It has constructed the trans-Atlantic station at Cape Cod, Mass., a Marconi school at Babylon, stations at Chicago and Milwaukee, a ship-reporting station at Sagaponack, L. I., installed the system on several steamships, and begun work in Cuba and Alaska.

Practical Results Here

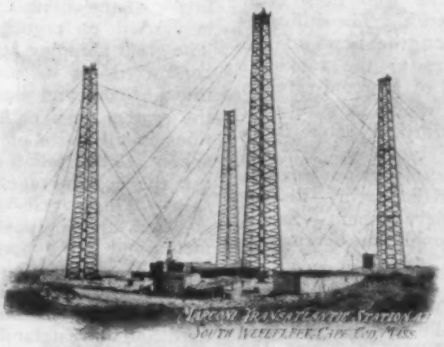
There remains for it now only the development of the system, the building of more stations, and the extension of its business in all parts of the United States, to reap the reward. In the Company's purpose to distribute a part of its treas-

ury stock in the present manner, there is considerable wisdom. The more widely its stock is held, the more stable will be its condition. Moreover, in the present opportunity, the advantages of the investment are quickly grasped by the many. If trans-Atlantic wireless telegraphy is not an immediate possibility, would the Italian Government be likely to appropriate $150,000 for the establishment of Marconi's system between Italy and South America? Would the London *Times* have made a contract for a daily wireless news service from America?

The Cuban Government has given the American Company wireless privileges in its territory, and a service is to be established shortly between Cuba, Porto Rico and Florida.

The United States Government has awarded the American Company a contract to establish the system in Alaska.

Marconi has sent wireless messages over three thousand miles.



What are the Rewards

Several hundred dollars a month come from the messages received at and sent from Nantucket, Babylon, and Sagaponack. A considerable revenue comes from the present installations on trans-Atlantic steamships, and this business is likely to increase with extension of service.

Royalties will come from many private installations on yachts, coast and gulf steamers, and sailing ships. The Cape Cod trans-Atlantic station, working at less than half its capacity in speed, half the time, at half the present cable rates, will bring in *over a million dollars a year.*

Thomas A. Edison says that there is absolutely no scientific, mechanical, or technical reason why Marconi shall not attain a speed of five hundred words per minute in trans-Atlantic transmission. All our estimates of earning capacity are based upon a speed of fifteen words per minute!

In addition to these revenues, there are still to be considered the business in Hawaii, Alaska, Cuba, Porto Rico, in overland work, on the Great Lakes, and in various coast stations on the Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific.

The Responsibility of the Enterprise

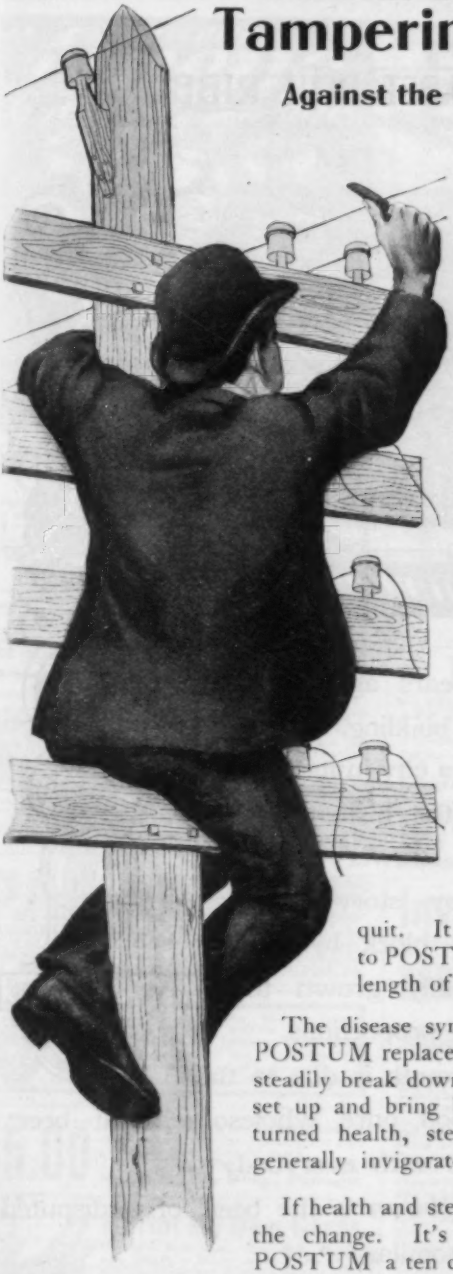
Marconi's American Company is guided by a Board of Directors which includes Hon. John W. Griggs, ex-Attorney General of the United States; Samuel Insull, President of the Chicago Edison Co.; E. Rollins Morse, banker; Spencer Trask, banker; Mr. Eugene H. Lewis, and ten other well-known business and professional men. Its technical board comprises Mr. Marconi, Mr. Thomas A. Edison, and Prof. M. I. Pupin, of Columbia University.

Without doubt, the American Marconi Company will shortly become one of the best-dividend-producing businesses in this country. Its commercial reward is at hand and, with the present stock issue, it is safe to say, the public's opportunity to share at very advantageous terms will cease. At the present time, and for a short time only, subscriptions are being received for certificates representing $5.00 each of the stock of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America in blocks of twenty or multiples thereof, at the rate of $4.00. These five-dollar certificates are issued by the Continental Trust Company of New York.

Checks should be sent to Munroe & Munroe, Dept. 20, Broad Exchange Building, New York; Gaff Building, Chicago; or Canada Life Building, Montreal, or one may have his local bank secure the stock for him if desirable. Munroe & Munroe are the managers of the Marconi Underwriting Syndicate and the stock may be had only through them. They reserve the right to reject any or all applications, and cannot promise now to maintain the present price for long. If fuller information should be desired, Munroe & Munroe will gladly furnish it, but it would be well for all those interested to write promptly, sending application for what stock they wish to buy.

Tampering with the Wires

Against the Law and Dangerous.



Coffee directly attacks the heart and nerves to such an extent that life insurance companies have recently added the term "Coffee Heart" to the list of dangerous maladies. Coffee is also responsible for most of the indigestion and dyspepsia in the world and the fact that it is a pronounced diuretic irritant causes many cases of kidney trouble.

Medical science tells us coffee is responsible for more suffering than any other drink in common use. In its concentrated form coffee is a dangerous drug, to be rated with morphine, strychnine, etc. The man, woman or child who drinks coffee puts him or herself at odds with Nature's laws and tampers with the network of delicate nerves.

Many sufferers know all these facts yet continue drinking coffee or tea because they feel the need of a hot drink at mealtime. They cannot (or think they cannot) quit. It is easy to break away by shifting to POSTUM COFFEE boiled the proper length of time and served with rich cream.

The disease symptoms begin to change the day POSTUM replaces coffee and the POSTUM will steadily break down those diseases which coffee has set up and bring back the delicious feeling of returned health, steady nerves, clear head and a generally invigorated system.

If health and steady nerves are worth while, make the change. It's a very simple matter to give POSTUM a ten days' trial. Results will tell.

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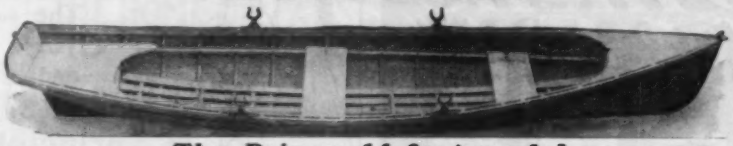
THE BOATS OF TO-DAY



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A Vacation Hint To You!

Read the announcement on page xii of this issue of The Black Cat.

TWO CONVENTIONS

San Francisco, Cal., will overflow from August 17th to 22d with the veterans of the Grand Army, and in October (20th to 24th) the solid men who compose the Bankers' National Convention will meet in the same city.

San Francisco has a climate of its own, tonic all the year round and bracing, but the late summer is always delightful. The rains have not yet come, and the trade winds have ceased: the skies are cloudless, but there is no heat, no sultry days or nights, no mosquitoes. The sea air is exhilarating and the crowds can be seen without discomfort.

The illuminated city by night, and Golden Gate Park, the Cliff House and the Presidio by day, to say nothing of excursions a short distance away to Monterey, Santa Cruz, Del Monte, and the great Lick Observatory near San Jose with a view from the top of Mt. Hamilton over the splendid Santa Clara Valley, will amply repay a visit to the Metrópolis of the West.

The rates to the Conventions, via the Southern Pacific, will be very low and it will be an excellent opportunity to visit California.

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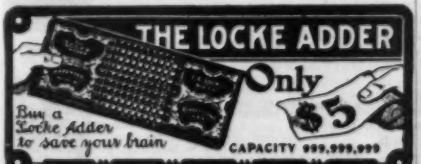

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Telegraph Outfits - - - 2.25
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Bicycle Electric Lights - 3.00
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A Bridegroom's Substitute. Mary Van Brunt Hunter.	**$200**	"
Penelope's Proposals. Swift Adams.		
One of the Few. Minnie S. Baker.		

The Well-bred Young Lady in a Barber Shop at Midnight.

(There was given to The Authors' Club of Louisville, Ky., the problem of writing a short story in which a well-bred young lady has to find herself, in a natural manner, in a barber shop at midnight, and as a result the following five tales were produced.)

A Hair-breadth 'Scape.	Margaret Steele Anderson.
The Pink Umbrella.	Evelyn Snead Barnett.
Force of Circumstances.	Mary F. Leonard
The Golden Tresses.	Mrs. Attwood R. Martin.
Ladies' Night.	Alice Caldwell Hegan.

The Gargoyle Room. Anna McClure Sholl.		
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A Brilliant Coincidence. Anne Rankin Osborne.		
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They do so because the small beginner of to-day may become the large mail order concern of to-morrow.

The great mail order house of Montgomery Ward & Co., which is worth millions, was started by a beginner who was a poor man at the beginning of the business.

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If you are interested in these talks, look for a new one each month in this magazine, or if you want full information at once, write to-day for my free booklet, Co-operation for Profit. It presents the very best means for beginners in the mail order business. It will do you no good unless you have a working capital of at least $25.00. If you can not command this amount do not write to me until you can.

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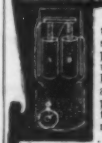

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Through a remarkable system of profit-sharing investment certificates, which are practically first mortgage bonds, six great industrial enterprises in St. Louis working co-operatively have increased their business over one thousand per cent., and their resources from a few thousands to over three millions in real estate, buildings and tangible property in three years. The investors in those certificates received during the past year alone (1902) a total of 48 per cent. in profits on their investment. **Under this plan the investor can withdraw part or all of his investment at ANY time he wishes, the same as though deposited in a savings bank, and takes absolutely no risk.** During 1902, three of these enterprises were a heavy source of expense. Now all of them are developed to the point of large profits. One of them started four years ago is the largest of its sort in the world, owns one of the finest buildings in the country, and has assets of a million and a half dollars and has **no indebtedness.** A new issue of these certificates which promises to be even more successful than the last, has recently been made in order to develop a new enterprise. **The nature of the plan makes it necessary to scatter these certificates widely, and in small sums owing to the privilege the investor has of withdrawing his investment at a moment's notice** which would require a large reserve of idle money to be kept on hand, if the securities were sold locally. If you have from $10.00 to $5,000 you wish to invest where **you can withdraw it instantly in cash,** where it will be absolutely secure, where it will pay you 6 per cent. per annum guaranteed, and payable quarterly, and an equal share with the stockholders in the yearly profits **without** the stockholders risk. Send for Book C, and bank references of

THE DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT CO., St. Louis, Missouri.

The Age of Steel

This is the age of metal, the age of steel. To-day wagons are made of steel. The great whaleback freighting boats are made of steel. The great warships which defend our shores are made of steel. The great airships which will eventually cross this continent will be made of steel, or of other metal, controlling the volatile vapors which will be used to overcome the light, unstable and intangible medium of the air.

Is there no lesson in these reflections? It seems to me that there certainly is. The conclusion seems certain that at least in the navigation of water, the day of wood is past, and the day of steel is here.

I do not make battleships, because I am busy in building smaller craft after some notions of my own. (The Mullins' Type.) I build boats for pleasure or for business, for hunting, fishing, traveling, canoeing. I build boats for any need, and for every purpose. I don't make them out of wood. That obsolete material is not good enough to-day. I make my boats out of steel. My boats do not oxidize, they do not rust, they do not wear out. AND THEY

Do Not Sink!

I say that any clinker-built boat is apt to leak. This is true whether it be built either of wood or of metal on the old clinker lines. The joints may spread, and they have a way of always taking the wrong time to do so. My own boats are smooth-skinned. They have few joints. They are built in plates, like warships. Instead of being clinker-built they are carvel built. If you try the difference of dragging a cat by the tail over a carpet, and dragging it by the head on a smooth floor, you will find the difference between the running of any clinker-built boat of wood or metal, and my smooth-skinned metal boats. There is no craft yet made, whether of wood or metal, which has the same ease and smoothness of motion on the water which is attained by these smooth-skinned metal boats of mine. The slightest trial will prove this at once.

They are the New Mullins' Type. In the New Mullins' Type of smooth-skinned metal boats there are no lap strake joints, no starting seams, no calking, and no leaking. Each boat has its plates pressed into true shape by means of great dies. Each boat is like every other boat made on that die. It cannot leak. It cannot break or buckle like a metal lap strake boat. It is strong, stiff, staunch in every way. And it is water-tight "for keeps."

Uncle Sam's steel warships weigh thousands of tons, but they float. The air does it. In every one of the boats of the New Mullins' Type there are ample air-tight compartments. These boats, even when upside down, will float, not sufficiently to drown you, but sufficiently to save you. These air-tight chambers may mean the saving of the life of you or your family. A wooden boat upsets as easily as a metal one. It does not have the same carrying quality, whether right side up or upside down. Metal and air will float you in the air eventually, and they will float you in the water now better than anything else. It is one of the greatest sources of satisfaction and comfort in my business to feel that when I am sending out these boats to be used by the public, by all sorts of persons, some of them careless, ignorant or awkward, I am sending out boats which are

Life Savers!

I unhesitatingly say that these are the *safest boats* put on the market in any material whatever, or made by any maker whatever.

This does not mean that my boats are awkward, clumsy or heavy. Foot for foot, one of the New Mullins' type of boats weighs no more than a clinker-built wooden boat. At the same time it will outwear a dozen such boats. A boat of the New Mullins' Type is better than a log. It is better than a bundle of reeds. It is better than a birch bark. It is better than a wooden shell boat. It is better than a clinker-built metal boat. In short, I say, and I honestly believe, that it is the best boat ever put upon the market in this or any other country, whether for purposes of sport, pleasure or business. I do not say that this boat is "just as good" as any other boat manufactured. I say it is JUST AS MUCH BETTER than any other boat made as the clinker-built boat is better than the birch bark, as the birch bark is better than the hollow log.

When I first began to make metal boats people could not get the idea into their heads that a metal boat could be safe. But gradually, and then with a rush, the boat users of the country realized the truth. To-day my business in metal boats is an enormous one. I am building large additional factory room. The Mullins' Boats are being shipped to all parts of the civilized world.

It will give me pleasure to show any hunter, any fisher, any pleasure-boat user, indeed the user of any sort of boat whatever, my line of boats, and I invite all to visit my factory or to see my goods in the hands of my many agents throughout the country. I ask those who cannot see the actual boat to send for my catalogue, wherein I have tried to illustrate and explain in detail the making of the New Mullins' Type Boats.

W. H. MULLINS, 471 Depot Street, Salem, Ohio

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The Passenger Department of the Southern Pacific publish "Sunset," a finely illustrated Magazine devoted chiefly to California, and a great number of booklets and folders about California Resorts and the industrial life of the State. "Sunset" costs ten cents a month or one dollar a year; the booklets are free. They embrace Lake Tahoe, Mt. Shasta, the wonderful Kings River Canon, the Yosemite and Big Trees, the Giant Forest, and the Coast Resorts. Industrially there is The Settlers' Primer, the Orange Primer, the Land of Opportunity, California Industries, California for Everybody, Yosemite, a lecture, with slides, about which correspondence is solicited, will be found worth looking into. These publications also include The Big Tree Book, finely illustrated, costing ten cents and the Big Tree Picture (21 x 28) fifty cents.

If one wishes a knowledge of the attractions and advantages of this wonderful region, these publications will be found helpful. Write L. H. Nutting, General Eastern Agent, Southern Pacific, 349 Broadway, New York, for what you want.

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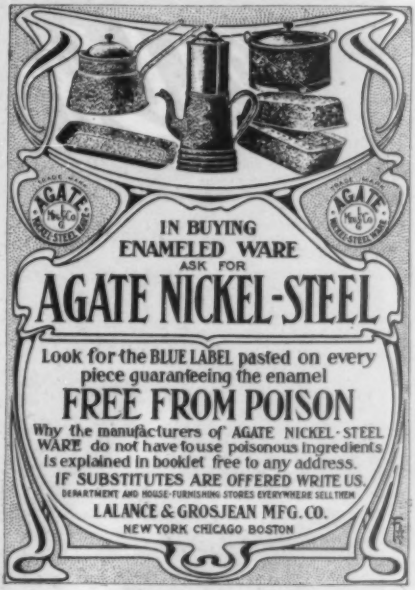
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When we got it we saved the mother cells. And all the yeast used in Schlitz Beer from that time, and forever, is developed from those original cells.

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Drinking Schlitz Beer means drinking good health.

Not another beverage which you drink is so carefully made. We even filter all the air that touches it, and sterilize every bottle after it is sealed.

Yet the price of common beer buys it.

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Parker Pens are made in various styles, to suit varied requirements, such as correspondence, shorthand writing, book-keeping, manifolding (that is, making duplicate and original copies at one writing), and, in fact, for every purpose where writing is done. No student is properly equipped whose outfit does not include one of these pens. They range in price, starting at $1.50 to $2.00, $2.50, and upward, according to size and ornamentation. A more moderate priced pen—the Palmer—I sell for $1.00. If you cannot find one of the 9000 dealers that sell the Parker Pen, order direct from me. I would like to send you one of our beautifully illustrated Catalogues. It would give you more information than I have room for here.

I would like to have you write me to-day.

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P. S.—If you will state in your letter that you are an INTENDING PURCHASER of a Fountain Pen, I will send you, complimentary, a 6-in. Aluminum Rule and Paper Cutter, on receipt of stamp for postage—to others 12 cents.

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Alpha is Different

Have you tried other Salad Dressings and Table Sauces and do not like them? TRY ALPHA. Is your appetite dull? TRY ALPHA. Is your appetite good? ALPHA imparts a crowning smack. One trial and you will keep a bottle of ALPHA on the table at every meal.

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Look for "The Lady and the Lobster" at All Grocers

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One Tablet makes a quart of milk into a milk jelly more delicious, refreshing and nourishing than other desserts. Also make Delicious Ice Cream. Package of 10 Tablets by mail 10 cents. No samples.

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He gained 4 pounds in the 10 days by the change.

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